

September 5, 2006
Regular Session

Minutes

Members present

Brady Wooten- Chairman
Allen Sneed- Vice- Chairman
Leon Casstevens- Commissioner
Kim Clark Phillips- Commissioner
D.C. Swaim- Commissioner

Others Present

Eric Williams-Interim County Manager
James Graham- County Attorney
Melinda Vestal-Clerk to the Board

Chairman Wooten called the meeting to order. Attorney Graham had the invocation. The Board had the pledge.

Public comments

Alice Singh, Yadkinville, stated she has been attending Commissioners' meeting for the past five years. She then commented on the burning of the gray house, the jail, the courthouse, handicap issues at the park and the cost of the animal shelter. She stated all these issues take persistence to get the job done. She also commented on the trash committee because she had requested a committee for the animal shelter but never got anywhere.

Eddie Norman, UNIFI, addressed the Board concerning birds roosting at the T-5 building. He stated UNIFI had purchased a blaster machine to get rid of the birds, but the blaster is very loud and violates the noise ordinance, so UNIFI would like to request to use the blaster between the hours of 6:15-7:00 a.m. and then from 6:30-7:30 p.m. setting it off anywhere from 5 to 15 times during these allotted times.

Minutes

***Commissioner Casstevens made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Barney Hill-citizen request

James Conrad, citizen, addressed the Board concerning the Barney Hill Community Center. He stated the center is not being used or maintained. He does the mowing to keep it from looking so bad. He asked the Board if he could lease or purchase the property. The property is located off Rockford Road. He stated the property was used back in 1988 but has not had much use since then.

Attorney Graham stated in 1970 there was a group who formed the Barney Hill Community Council and they obtained a grant to build the center. The property was deeded to the county and leased back to the Council. There is a clause in the deed which states if the center is no longer used it reverts back to Clarks Memorial Church.

Commissioner Sneed stated the deed indicated the owner is Clarks Memorial Church.

Commissioner Casstevens asked if Mr. Conrad could continue to mow.

Attorney Graham stated yes he could.

Crossroads-review

David Swann, Director, reviewed the end of year report. He reported on the top four issues: lost management of Medicaid, new services, new legislation requirements, and new providers in Yadkin County.

Mr. Swann discussed possible mergers, but Crossroads is large enough to stand strong. Crossroads is safe under the new law, but there are some counties not meeting the requirements and are looking for counties to merge with.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about the Crisis Center.

Mr. Swann stated it closed in June. The program is being redesigned as an intensive team program and will open under a new provider by January 1st with residential beds.

Mr. Swann complimented Yadkin County on their representation regarding mental health.

Economic Development

Bobby Todd, Director, updated the Board on economic development in the county. Mr. Todd discussed the upcoming Grand National Cross Country Racing Event-Yadkin Valley Stomp and with an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 visiting our county. Mr. Todd reviewed the scenic by-way routes. He stated that a grant from Blue Ridge Heritage will help with the visitors' center. There have been two new site reviews at the East Bend Industrial Park.

Social Services- board appointment

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to reappoint Commissioner Casstevens to the Board of Social Services. Commissioner Sneed seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Chairman Wooten called for a break.

COG-CDBG- Scattered Site Housing

Rebecca Kassner, COG, reviewed the Scattered Site Housing Program and how the program assists low income families repair or replace their homes.

Mr. Williams stated the Board needed to authorize the funding and the grant agreement for the Scattered Site Housing Program. Mr. Williams stated the program would be administered by the COG.

***Commissioner Swaim made the motion to approve the funding for the Scattered Site Housing Program. Commissioner Phillips seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to approve the grant agreement in the amount of \$400,000 for the Scattered Site Housing Program. Commissioner Casstevens seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Jail-repairs, consultant contract

Mr. Williams discussed the short and long term issues with the jail. He asked the Sheriff about the estimates.

Sheriff Cain stated there have not been any changes since the last meeting. They are still waiting on the bids.

Major Widener stated a dedicated line has been run to the kitchen for drinking water.

Sheriff Cain stated any plan would have to be sent to Raleigh for approval.

The Board discussed a time schedule to fix the problems.

Commissioner Phillips stated the Board needed to come up with a ball park figure on how much to spend to fix the problems and decide if we want to repair the jail or continue to house the prisoners elsewhere.

Attorney Graham suggested contacting other vendors because the meeting was not a true emergency meeting. He stated the issue has been brought up before in the Grand Jury Report.

Sheriff Cain stated they are contacting other vendors.

Mr. Williams stated he discussed this with the Sheriff. He also has asked Gary Hayes to get involved. Mr. Williams stated he hoped to have estimates by the next meeting.

Chairman Wooten stated he would like this resolved by the next meeting.

Commissioner Swaim stated all vendors needed to have the same information.

Sheriff Cain stated the plan could or could not be approved by the State.

Mr. Williams stated the end result is to solve the problems for the best price.

Mr. Williams presented the proposal for services from Steve Allen, Solutions for Local Government. Mr. Williams stated he contacted other counties regarding Mr. Allen's expertise and all recommended him highly. The proposal is for seven weeks and the cost is not to exceed \$9,600. Mr. Williams recommended the Board accept Mr. Allen's proposal.

Sheriff Cain stated Mr. Allen reviewed the jail and is very knowledgeable on jails.

Commissioner Phillips stated she was very impressed with Mr. Allen and his expertise in jails.

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to approve the scope of services as submitted by Mr. Allen. Commissioner Sneed seconded.**

Commissioner Sneed stated Mr. Allen has dealt with several contractors and he would know which ones are the best to build a jail. He also stated the needs for the jail need to be decided by Yadkin County, not decided by an architect.

Attorney Graham asked for a word change on page eight, paragraph two, change from we to you.

Chairman Wooten stated we don't need a planner to tell us what we need. He feels we are jumping ahead. Chairman Wooten asked do we need a new jail? There are several questions that need to be answered; funding, location, how many beds and what kind of timeline. Chairman Wooten commented that the Sheriff said he could fill as many beds as provided. Chairman Wooten stated it would be a sad day in Yadkin County for us to do this and overlook our children. He discussed taxes. Chairman Wooten stated he is not against the jail, but he will not vote for a "Hilton" jail. He discussed a 76 bed facility at a cost of \$1.5 million not including site prep. He also knows of a 9 acre tract with water and sewer and is already zoned. He is for working on a jail, but not at the expense of the taxpayers.

Commissioner Casstevens stated the county should let the people decide by voting for a bond; this would be the only way he would support a new jail.

Commissioner Phillips stated the county needs a new jail and hiring someone whose expertise is jails would save the county money.

Commissioner Phillips asked the Sheriff if a new jail was needed?

Sheriff Cain responded yes ma'am.

Commissioner Sneed discussed transporting the prisoners/inmates and the liabilities and costs involved. The money being spent for all this is going down the drain, when this money could be going towards a new jail. He discussed the loan for the schools and the interest accruing on the money which could be used towards a new jail.

Chairman Wooten agreed there is money being wasted on transporting prisoners/inmates, but hiring a planner just draws out the issue. He suggested sitting down with the Sheriff and discussing the needs and determining a timeline.

Sheriff Cain stated the Board of Commissioners are obligated to provide a place for prisoners. He informed the Board he is not a jail planner.

Commissioner Phillip stated there are state and federal guidelines that have to be followed. She called for the question.

Commissioner Sneed stated Mr. Allen knows how to deal with architects and contractors. He stated Mr. Allen would direct the county to the right architects and save us money.

Chairman Wooten stated hiring a planner is a mistake.

The Board voted 3-2. Commissioners Wooten and Casstevens opposed.

Mr. Williams questioned the disbandment of the jail committee and asked the Board to reconsider this action and allow them to continue.

Chairman Wooten stated that would be fine but he wanted to be notified of all meetings.

Commissioner Phillips stated the committee meets on the 4th Thursdays at 4:00 p.m.

Administration-records retention schedule

***Commissioner Swaim made the motion to approve the County Management Records Retention and Disposition Schedule if approved by Attorney Graham. Commissioner Phillips seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

DOT-road petition (Tise Road)

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to approve the petition for Tise Road. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Commissioner comments

***Commissioner Sneed made the motion to allow UNIFI to use a blaster to rid birds from roosting at T-5 from 6:15-7:00 a.m. and from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. at 5 to 15 minute intervals until September 30th. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Commissioner Sneed informed the Board of a GIS Grant; Yadkin County's portion would be \$18,000, but could be more if other counties choose not to participate.

Mr. Williams stated he has a meeting scheduled with Rachel Boone and John Bridgers later this week.

Commissioner Casstevens inquired about the roofs at the Ag building and library.

Ms. Vestal stated she had received an additional estimate and would pass the information on to Mr. Williams.

Commissioner Phillips reminded everyone of the 9-11 Memorial Service.

Commissioner Phillip commented the Towns of Jonesville and Yadkinville will be voting on alcohol September 12th.

Chairman Wooten handed out information regarding the purchase of a TV for Walter Smith because his was damaged from the rain. Chairman Wooten stated a letter should be sent to the agencies that are provided space by the county notifying them we only cover the building not the contents.

***Commissioner Swaim made the motion to reimburse Walter Smith the \$175 for the TV purchased due to his being damaged by the water. Commissioner Phillips seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Chairman Wooten asked to have a water update at each meeting.

Mr. Williams stated bid notices have been sent to the papers for the Jonesville and Hwy 601 projects.

Chairman Wooten requested Mr. Williams obtain planning fees from other counties.

Chairman Wooten discussed having another solid waste meeting but with only select members. The meeting will be to discuss funding and management. He suggested the Commissioners, Cheri, Mr. Williams, Ken Larking, Ron Niland and Jack Loudermilk attend this meeting. The meeting was scheduled for 6:30, September 11th in the planning conference room.

Chairman Wooten stated the county is going down the wrong path regarding the jail. He stated the people should vote on a bond for the funding of the jail. This is going to be very costly and cause even more budget woes.

***Chairman Wooten made the motion to direct Mr. Williams to proceed with a jail bond vote with the amount to be announced. Commissioner Casstevens seconded.**

Commissioner Phillips stated doing a bond referendum is premature; we have no cost figures.

Chairman Wooten suggested having a meeting to discuss the issues.

Commissioner Sneed stated the people could vote but they need to know what they are voting on and at this time we have no answers.

Commissioner Swaim stated there are times when the Board of Commissioners has to step up and make decisions just like the approval of the \$6 million for the schools, which was done without a bond. He stated a bond for a jail would not pass; we have to provide a facility.

Chairman Wooten stated he voted for the \$6 million for the schools without a tax increase. Chairman Wooten read the following statement:

DO WE TRUST THE VOTERS OF YADKIN COUNTY?

I TRUST THE VOTERS OF YADKIN COUNTY.

Let the people vote!

Historically, the citizens of Yadkin County have had the opportunity to vote on bond proposals in our county. Now, however, the county is rushing consideration of a multi million dollar issue that bypasses the public's traditional role in approving the county's bond issues. Such a move not only would put the county's consumers at risk for higher taxes, bypassing the people's right to vote on a jail bond issue will cost taxpayers million's of dollars and cause a huge budget shortfall next year.

Placing the county million's in debt could raise taxes. Unless the county's spending philosophy changes, which of late includes mountains of borrowed money, the next commissioners of Yadkin County will face the largest tax increases or the largest budget reductions ever experienced in our history. Voters should be allowed to vote, especially when their taxes may go up to pay the bill. This is a good reason to let the people vote!

It's the right thing to do! It's simple, let the people vote!

There indeed may be some real building needs in the county's jail, but it was built by the people, paid for by the people, and the people deserve a right to vote because they are the ones that will be making payments on this debt for many years to come. Let the people vote!

Commissioner Phillips stated she does not agree that there should be a bond vote, but does agree we need to move forward. She stated the Board approved to hire a planner whose expertise is jails. We need to build for the future.

Attorney Graham stated there is not enough time to hold a bond vote at the November election.

The Board voted 2-3. Commissioners Phillips, Sneed and Swaim opposed.

Manager comments

Mr. Williams stated the jail is an important issue and he is confident the Board will do the right thing.

Mr. Williams stated he met with the Department Heads regarding the 9-11 Memorial Service. The Departments Heads will allow those employees, who can attend, the opportunity to do so.

Attorney Graham handed out the tax collection report.

Recess

***Commissioner Phillips made the motion to recess until Monday, September 11th at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Melinda Vestal, CMC
Clerk to the Board